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tium,⁷ dealing with the relatively distinct problem of the date and authorship of the Epistle to the Romans, it is not possible to consider here. But of the main and most revolutionary theory, that relating to the origin of Christianity, it may be said, by way of recapitulation, that not only does the author's own evidence, when critically examined, fail to yield any material ground for the theory; but also that, in part, the theory is flatly contradicted by evidence in his chosen sources, of which, for unexplained reasons, he neglects to apprise his readers.

It remains to add that, while the foregoing examination has dealt with the hypotheses of *Der vorchristliche Jesus* as if there were no general, logical presumption either against or for them, they really conflict with all the antecedent probabilities in such a matter, and could therefore be justified only by the most overwhelming mass of specific historical evidences. For the theory of the book requires us to suppose that a being originally worshiped as divine, came, in a century or so, to be thought of as a person so definitely human as the central figure of the Synoptic Gospels: one born in plebeian family in an ill-esteemed province, who hungered and thirsted, who lived with publicans and sinners, who (except in manifestly late and corrupt passages) is represented as speaking little of himself, who denied his own omniscience, who was betrayed and given over to a shameful death, whose serene faith was transiently overcome in one awful moment of physical anguish on the cross; whose story was associated with definite places and historic characters, and whose brothers and kin and personal followers were, in the early second century, remembered as real persons. The Transformation of the Prophet of Nazareth into the strange, oracular figure found in the Fourth Gospel, is conceivable; but the transformation of a being even more vague and superhuman than that of the Fourth Gospel into the hero of the Synoptic Tradition, is a process that passes belief. We are not without historic examples of the apotheosis of great leaders of mankind; but there is surely no historic parallel for such a rapid and definite humanizing of a metaphysical hypostasis.

ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY.

THE FUTURE OF ARTIFICIAL LANGUAGES.

In *The Monist* for October, 1907, there appears an editorial essay on "Artificial Languages," which seems to me so full of mis-

⁷ Discussed by the same writer in *The Hibbert Journal*, I, pp. 308-334.

conceptions and wrong deductions, that I venture to reply to the same. For this purpose it will be best to take such statements as I consider erroneous, and reply to them seriatim.

Dr. Carus says: "With all the interest we cherish for the promotion of cosmopolitan ideals, we do not believe that the aim can be reached by the short cut of an artificial language."

To this I would answer that this aim is only secondary, and that the object of an international language is primarily of a more practical nature, namely to make communications between persons of different mother tongues easier, whether they be travelers, commercial correspondents, scientists, missionaries, or what not. Whether or not a feeling of international goodwill springs up thereby (which seems probable) is a secondary consideration.

He continues: "We trust to nature and hope that nature herself will in the long run work out an international language, not by a formal agreement nor after the fashion of acts of international legislature, but by natural growth. When the time will be ripe the fruit will be developed, and we see the time coming when one speech will be understood all over the world. Esperantists are more enthusiastic and cannot bide patiently that far-away time. They think that by artificial methods they can improve upon nature's tedious processes."

This is the most astounding utterance of a devotee of the "scientific method" that I know of. Carried to its logical conclusion it would kill all effort in any direction; inventions would be useless, as nature will "in the long run work out" whatever is necessary, "when the time will be ripe." What is the use of "improving upon nature's tedious processes by artificial methods"? We might just as well wait for nature to build our railroads and steamships; it is certainly easier and requires much less effort.

The fate of Volapük is then explained, and the reason of its failure, but that is no argument at all against an international language. As the first really practical attempt at the solution of this difficult problem it was remarkably successful, and that it was not more perfect is easily accounted for by the fact that its "inventor" was a country priest who had never traveled and was more or less ignorant of philology or foreign languages. How many of the most useful inventions have been so perfect from the start that they could not be and were not improved? To take one instance out of many and one whose evolution we can watch at the present time: How many unsuccessful attempts have been made for the navigation of

the air, and still the experiments continue? So that the failure of Volapük and the probable failure of Esperanto are no proof whatever against the feasibility of the project. And here I would at once say that I hold no brief for Esperanto and am no Esperantist. With almost everything Dr. Carus says against Esperanto I heartily agree; from the very start I consider the alphabet too large, because it contains difficult sounds and such as are too similar to each other; and the use of diacritical signs is highly objectionable. Even MM. Couturat and Leau, who in their *Histoire de la langue universelle* have carefully analysed about sixty projects for such a language, and who strongly endorse Esperanto and consider it by far the best so far produced, devote thirty-three pages out of the sixty on Esperanto in their book to criticisms and suggestions for improvements. Although these suggestions are almost all very pertinent, not a single one of them, so far as I know, has been adopted by the Congress of Esperantists. This is sufficient proof to show that Esperanto, such as it is, is unfit to become "the" international language, and if all these improvements were adopted, it would no longer be "Esperanto."

In passing I would say that personally I consider "Bolak" as by far the best attempt so far made, even if the vocabulary is somewhat difficult; its grammar is certainly the most logical and the easiest, and with some small changes could be made to answer the purpose perfectly. But this is of course a personal opinion and carries no weight.

The editor favors "English as a world-speech" and says that it is "far easier and much more useful to learn English than Esperanto." There is no doubt that English to-day is far more useful than Esperanto, as English is spoken by about 200 millions and Esperanto not even by one million. But that it is "far easier" can certainly be disputed with very good reason. There are many trustworthy cases on record of persons having learned Esperanto sufficiently well in a week or two to be able to correspond with the help of a dictionary. And there are cases of persons and even children below fifteen having learnt Esperanto in three to six months sufficiently well to speak freely and even to make public speeches. Can such a claim be made for English or any other living or dead language? And I agree that Esperanto is not "as it claims to be," and I personally think that an easier language can be "invented." But here again it must be borne in mind that it is not absolutely necessary for such an international language to be so extremely easy, although

ease of acquisition is of course a great desideratum. The object of such a language is to serve for everybody as the "second" language, and the only one outside of one's mother-tongue (philologists or others taking special interest in languages of course excepted.) It will therefore, once such a language has been agreed upon, not be necessary any more to learn two, three or more foreign languages, in order to be able to travel in comfort, to correspond with foreigners, to read the most important scientific works, etc. Nor is such a language in reality intended for the present grown-up generation, but for future ones. It will therefore be taught in schools, and even if its vocabulary for instance should not be so "international" and therefore so easy as Esperanto, it would still require much less time for its study and much more time could be devoted to other studies in schools than at present.

But this is a digression; even if English were as easy as Dr. Carus claims, which is by no means the case, it would never be officially adopted as the international language, because other nations would very justly object to the great advantage English-speaking nations would thereby enjoy. But the English orthography alone is sufficient to prevent English from ever being voluntarily accepted as the international language. And he is right in saying that a reform of English spelling would not help much or would make matters worse. The fact is that the English alphabet is woefully deficient for the sounds it must interpret, and although the editor seems to delight in the incongruities of English spelling, I doubt whether there are many who share this delight with him. He says: "We must here enter a second protest against the statement [of the Simplified Spelling Board] that the traditional English spelling is a puzzle to the stranger within our gates. The writer at any rate knows from his own experience that his only difficulty with the English was its pronunciation, while the spelling was one of the greatest helps to enter into the very spirit of the language. In fact it almost seems as if the spelling were made for foreigners and if English were spelled phonetically it would add immense difficulty to such students." Now it might at once be said that much of the difficulty he found with the pronunciation resulted from the spelling, and if it had been spelled phonetically, this difficulty would have been much less. But leaving this point aside, Dr. Carus cannot take his own experience as an objective truth. He commenced the study of English, as he himself says, "at a comparatively late period in my (his) life"; he had a University training, a perfect

knowledge of Latin and Greek and probably of Old German or Anglo-Saxon, and he has a special talent for acquiring languages, as evidenced by his very thorough knowledge of English, his proficiency in Chinese, etc. How many of those who learn English have these advantages? I venture to say, not one per cent; and I doubt whether even he would have learnt it so well and so easily, if he had not lived in a country where English is the national language. Dr. Carus says that the *gh* in "through" reminds him of its derivation from the German *durch*, in "though" from *doch*, etc.; what proportion of those learning English spelling, whether natives or foreigners, are reminded of these etymologies? And are all foreigners studying English, Germans? Is a Frenchman also reminded of *durch* and *doch*? They only see that this *gh* is not pronounced and seems quite arbitrary, and that *ough* is pronounced in about half a dozen different ways, according to the word in which it is used (tough, though, through, thorough, plough, cough, etc.). To the vast majority of those for whom an international language is intended and even to persons whose mother-tongue is English, English orthography is an immense stumbling-block; in no other language are there so many dictionaries in use, almost at every one's elbow, to clear up doubts in spelling, and it is common cause of complaint in business houses that it is difficult to find clerks who know how to spell correctly. Even university graduates are often bad spellers; at least I saw such a charge brought against an entire graduating class at Harvard. Dr. Carus puts the blame for the difficulty children in English-speaking countries have in learning to spell correctly on "the methods of teaching orthography" and the "spelling primers," which "appear to be devised for the purpose of stultifying the children and making the study as hard for them as possible." If after ages of instruction and with all the advances made in pedagogy within recent years this is the state of our "spelling primers," the fault seems to lie not so much in the primers as in the orthography itself, and the utter absence of any system that can be intelligently applied to the spelling of English words, except by learning the spelling of every word by heart, just as a Chinese has to learn every character in his language by heart. The saying of the late President McKinley* which Dr. Carus cites, that "that man must be a fool who could not spell a word in several ways," was certainly intended as a joke, or if meant in earnest, is on the

* By "our great martyr president" (*Monist*, XVII, 617) the editor had reference to Lincoln and not to President McKinley.

same level as that other saying of his that "a cheap coat makes a cheap man," thereby putting a man's worth, not in his character but in his clothes, and forgetting that in the eyes of a swell, McKinley's own coat undoubtedly appeared "cheap." The fact of the matter is that no business house will knowingly engage an office man who does not spell correctly, and that the difficulty of English spelling is therefore a great drawback and detrimental to its ever being adopted as an international language, even if there were no other objections. But international jealousy and rivalry would prevent its adoption, even if English were in all respects fitted for such a purpose. I do not say of course that English is not largely used in international dealings at the present time, but an "international" language in the real sense is not this accidental use, but its formal adoption by all the leading nations for such an object. A short time ago French was the language most in vogue for this purpose, and it is conceivable that in the future some other nation may take the lead in world politics or commerce. In that case should Russian or German or Japanese or Chinese be used as the international language? Certainly neither of them could be called "easy." But to show that it is not necessary for the spelling to denote the derivation of a word, take for instance the Italian and Spanish languages. Are these any more difficult and puzzling because "filosofo, fotografo," etc. are spelled with an *f* instead of a *ph*? Not in the least; on the contrary, according to my humble opinion these languages and specially Italian, are much easier than English, and as they are also much more euphonious and, not belonging to any world-power, would not give rise to so much opposition and jealousy as English, either of them, but specially Italian, would be much better adapted for an international language than English, if any of the existing languages would do, which I doubt. The spelling of Italian and Spanish is almost phonetic and with a few slight changes could be made entirely so; after learning a few simple rules any one can read Italian or Spanish at sight, without understanding a word of these languages, while it is absolutely impossible to read English without knowing every word and even the meaning of sentences, as some words are differently pronounced, according to whether they happen to be used as a noun or a verb.

Another reason why English (or any other living language) ought not to be taken for an international one is that they are continually changing and adding new words, slang phrases, etc. which every foreigner would have to be continually learning, while an

artificial language, not being used colloquially among people of the same nation, would remain stationary and would adopt only such new words as would from time to time be officially promulgated by whatever central authority would exist for this purpose. How many to-day can read and understand the English of three or four hundred years ago or of even a nearer period? The editor says: "If the majority of people make up their minds to spell a word in a certain way, we for our part are willing to submit, and if the spelling is not sensible we can yield to the popular demand without great compunctions of conscience." This may be admissible for one's own mother-tongue (though I deny it even there), but it certainly will not do for an international language. Should the whole world be continually on the watch, whether "a majority" spell a word differently or attach new meanings to words? The very idea seems preposterous and is a strong argument against the adoption of any "natural" language for the purpose we have in view.

He says further: "The irregularities of our grammar are by no means a fault of our languages but a very useful contrivance of nature." Why this should be so is a mystery to me; we see that as languages evolve to higher grades, these irregularities tend to disappear, (for instance, all newly made verbs in French end in *er*); modern languages certainly have fewer of them than ancient ones, and English, the latest development of all, has the least. If "irregularities have not been invented to bother schoolboys but to facilitate every-day speech," then the most irregular language ought to be the best, and Dr. Carus contradicts himself by extolling English as the ideal world-language, when he gives as a reason for its becoming so "the simplicity of its grammatical and syntactical construction"; it would not be simple, if there were many irregularities.

Another objection which he urges against any artificial language is that if "certain roots shall have definite meanings and certain endings shall indicate definite grammatical relations, the number of word formations would be so great that we would be embarrassed by the wealth of the several modes of expression." This is the first time that I see this argument used as an objection to an artificial language; so far the objection has generally been on the other side, that there would not be enough words to express all the different shades of meaning. But I do not see the pertinence of the conclusion; only such words would be coined as are needed. Certainly it is an immense help to the memory, if from a comparatively

small number of root words any number of related ideas can be expressed with the help of well defined suffixes.

Dr. Carus says: "From among the many different possibilities, custom chooses one and stereotypes it to suit exact conditions."

This is undoubtedly the case in living languages, but in an international language, destined to be everybody's "second" tongue and not in everyday use among relatives and friends, no such "custom" would arise.

He says: "This process cannot be done by grammarians in the study." About this opinions differ, but the fact that it has been done and done sufficiently well to enable persons of different nationalities to converse together at their ease, though by no means in a perfect manner so far, seems to militate against this *a priori* reasoning. A great many authorities can be cited on either side of the question, and if a philologist like Max Müller says, that an artificial language can be constructed "more perfect, more regular and easier to learn" than any natural language, which statement can be supplemented by that of many other eminent philologists, philosophers and scientists, it carries at least as much weight as that of any number of other philologists, philosophers and scientists in opposition. A dogmatic "It can not be done," will not be decisive in view of the many discoveries and inventions that have been made in spite of positive predictions that it could not be done. Let it be tried, and if the first attempts do not succeed, try again and again; then we shall see whether it can be done or not. But even if all philologists etc. were in the negative camp, it would be no proof whatever. History teaches us that the members of a profession are generally the most conservative and opposed to any innovation. See the opposition of the medical profession to Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, to Vesalius's discoveries in anatomy, to vaccination, etc.; the engineers' objections to Stephenson's plan for a railroad, etc. If Max Müller has "declared one after another of the world-languages to be the best possible attempt," it only shows, if true, that he considered several of the attempts already made sufficiently good and coming up to the dictum as just mentioned by him. If therefore something better still is finally evolved, it will certainly "fill the bill" and be sufficiently good for all practical purposes; it need not be "absolutely perfect," if such a thing in any field of human endeavor is possible. Why should not Prof. Max Müller give "his blessing to Schleyer's Volapük" and later to Mr. Liptay's *Gemeinsprache*, when both worked in a field he so en-

thusiastically endorsed? This does not mean that he considered every attempt the best possible one, but only that it was an improvement on its predecessors.

The examples mentioned on page 611 of a foreign child saying "you gain," when she meant "you win," etc. militate against Dr. Carus's theory of using a living language with its many difficulties and ambiguities as an international one. In such a language every distinct meaning must have a special word, no matter whether they have this in English or any other language. Because the word "spring" in English means one of the four seasons, a mechanical contrivance, a jump, etc., is no reason why in an international language each of these meanings should not have its own distinct word, and then such errors become impossible.

The fate of Volapük and the probable similar fate of Esperanto and probably of others in the near future, is no argument at all against such a language. Dr. Carus quotes from a pamphlet of Professor Brugmann: "Volapük died a natural death. . . . The movement split into two camps. An international world-speech academy consisting of seventeen members of twelve different countries sought to preserve uniformity and union. The inventor of Volapük, Rev. Schleyer, was expected to join them, but he reserved to himself the right of vetoing their statutes in all questions of universal language. A union could not be attained and so the whole Volapük movement fizzled out." What does this prove? That the inventor of Volapük was unreasonable, and nothing more. But as Volapük was very imperfect, which as a first serious attempt was only to be expected, it is good for the movement as a whole, that he was unreasonable and that no union was effected.

Dr. Carus says: "Other philologists who are found in the ranks of Esperantists are Professors Schuchardt of Graz, Baudoin de Courtenay of St. Petersburg, and Jespersen of Copenhagen, but how Platonic their interest must be appears from the fact that they simply sanctioned the idea without attempting an invention of their own, in spite of being themselves trained philologists." This also is a strange statement; if they are Esperantists, why should they invent another language? They probably consider Esperanto good enough (with some modifications), or they would not be Esperantists. But granted that they consider Esperanto too deficient to become the international language, has every philologist the time or the inclination or even the capacity for such a tremendous work? Must every mechanician who is in favor of aerial navigation, try to invent a

flying machine, in order to prove that his interest is more than Platonic? The very idea is absurd.

Dr. Carus makes fun of Esperanto by saying "that *patro* means 'father,' and *patrino* (literally translated 'fatheress') means 'mother'; *junolo* means 'youth,' and since the prefix *mal* denotes a contrast, *maljunolo* means 'old man.'" I see nothing funny in this; such formations are certainly a great help to the memory, and while in cases like "mother" there might be another word, yet it should be allowed in cases of a lapse of memory to coin such a word with the suffix for femininity. In Spanish *hermano* is "brother," and *hermana* (literally "brotheress" or "female brother") means "sister." The same is the case in this language and Italian with the words for "uncle" and "aunt," etc. Has anybody called this an "amusing feature" of these languages before? On the contrary, for foreigners trying to learn them, it is extremely pleasant. If Professor Leskien, from whom Dr. Carus also quotes, cannot find any other objections or must even mention these to strengthen his case, it must be very weak indeed. What I wrote about "spring" applies also to his remark on the word "church," for "place of worship" and an institution like the Catholic "Church"; there must be different words, as they denote different ideas. Such objections seem to me puerile.

Dr. Carus says: "At the moment when Esperanto was actually introduced as an obligatory study in our schools and used for international purposes, the differences and divergencies of opinion as to how best to meet them, would lead to so much trouble that the whole structure would collapse." This does not seem to me at all probable; the very fact that an international language (whether Esperanto or any other) has been adopted by the leading nations and introduced into the schools, would show that that language had passed the era of "differences and divergencies of opinion," and it would be taught and learned like any other subject. In fact there would and could be less occasion for differences, once that stage is reached, than in many other subjects; there are continually new ideas and consequently differences springing up in physics, psychology, pathology, etc., etc., but that does not prevent these sciences from being taught and learned and used in practical life.

Whether a majority of "Academies" are at present in favor of, or against such a project, or whether they are undecided, as seems to be the case, from the quotation of Professor Brugmann's letter, that they "refused any expression at all," is of minor importance. This idea will have to fight its way against the conservatism of

academies and specialists like every other great idea that ever originated in the brain of man. Eventually it will not be Academies nor specialists who will carry this idea through, but men of affairs and action.

The statement that "languages are living organisms as much as animals, and it is not more or less possible to create spiritual than it is to create physical organisms," is certainly open to grave objections. There is no analogy whatever between a language and an animal, except in a very symbolical sense; languages have been created by men, though up to the present they have not been created perfect, but nobody has so far succeeded or is likely ever to succeed in creating an animal, no matter of how inferior a kind.

That it is easy to construct such a language, grammar as well as vocabulary, is by no means asserted; that there are many difficulties to be overcome, not the least of which is the apathy of the majority of mankind, is freely conceded; but that this should deter us from at least trying to solve the task, or that it is *eo ipso* impossible, not only to invent a language fit for the purpose but also to have it universally adopted, is strongly denied.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

While I do not believe that the adoption of an artificial language which should serve as a universal means of communication among people of different nationalities is feasible, I propose to have the problem discussed, and will not hinder the good work if such it be. I am not an enemy to the propaganda, but on the contrary believe that the discussion of the problem and attempts at constructing a universal language will prove beneficial. I have criticized the views of the advocates of Esperanto, but from my own standpoint I wish to give my critics also an ample opportunity to express their opinions and to censure my own propositions. I will say, however, that though I have given a careful perusal to Mr. Strauss's letter, I have not been convinced by his arguments.

I will dismiss at once a consideration of Esperanto because Mr. Strauss seems to agree with me that it does not fulfil the requirements, but I will repeat here that in my opinion the use of English would serve the purpose of an International language better than any artificial language heretofore proposed, first because it is the